

**Developing Solutions to Protect the Marine Environment
From Land-based Activities: Stakeholder Consultation**
Report of World Water Week in Stockholm Side Event
Tuesday 22 August 2006, 17:15-18:45

BACKGROUND

On Tuesday 22 August, 2006 Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, in collaboration with the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, held a stakeholder consultation on the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) at the World Water Week in Stockholm. The consultation was part of Stakeholder Forum's ongoing work to engage stakeholders in the preparatory process for the GPA's Second Intergovernmental Review, being held in Beijing, China on 16-20 October 2006. The consultation aimed to engage stakeholders from the freshwater community in preparing a stakeholder position for the IGR-2, by reviewing the draft *Beijing Declaration on furthering the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities*. Participants were invited to discuss the roles of stakeholders and national governments in developing solutions to these problems. The outcomes of this side event will input into the upcoming GPA's IGR-2.

Participants in the meeting highlighted the need to strengthen the inclusion and integration of cross cutting issues within the document. Emphasis was placed on the importance of marine resources for food security and human health, and that marine resources need to be better valued and understood. The need to establish quantifiable benchmarks for marine pollution was called for, as was the need for a universal set of indicators to assess marine pollution. Gender, and the diversity of people was highlighted as a critical element missing from the draft Beijing Declaration. The role of various Major Groups including local authorities and environmental NGOs in furthering the implementation of the GPA was discussed, and the need to reinforce multi-stakeholder participation at the national level was noted.

PRESENTATIONS

Chris Tompkins, of the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), opened the meeting by welcoming participants to the consultation. Highlighting the importance of stakeholder outreach to the GPA process, he said that DEFRA had provided a grant to Stakeholder Forum in order to support the engagement of stakeholders in the preparatory process of the IGR-2. Chris Tompkins explained that the GPA was adopted in 1995 by 108 Governments, and the European Commission, in response to the increasing threat to the marine environment from human activities on land. He noted that as an instrument to tackle marine pollution, the GPA has raised awareness of marine and coastal issues and the need to mainstream them into development planning. Chris Tompkins reviewed the various elements of the upcoming Second Intergovernmental Review (IGR-2) of the GPA, which will include a day on partnerships, a segment which agrees the Programme of Work for the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office, and a Ministerial/high-level segment which is expected to endorse the Beijing Declaration on furthering the implementation of the GPA. He underscored the strategic importance of the Review and the Beijing Declaration, in light of the GPA's increasing role as the framework through which the international community addresses oceans issues, and its role as a catalyst for regional partnerships.

Dr. Biliana Cicin-Sain, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, further emphasised the need to link the management of freshwater and coastal and ocean environments, noting that recognition of this is growing among leaders. She outlined the role of the Global Forum in bringing together all stakeholders in promoting the implementation of the global agenda on oceans, coasts, and small islands and the links between freshwater and oceans. She underscored the importance of the GPA, as the only intergovernmental programme that addresses the linkages between freshwater and the coastal environment. Dr. Cicin-Sain then

highlighted the importance of partnerships in furthering the implementation of the GPA, and said a number of proposed or ongoing partnerships will be presented at Partnerships Day at the IGR-2. She explained that the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands is proposing a partnership with many organisations from around the world to prepare a global report on the status and trends in the implementation of policy initiatives in ecosystem management, and integrated coastal and ocean management.

Dr. Miriam Balgos, Global Forum of Oceans Coasts and Islands, further elaborated on the Partnerships Day of the IGR-2, explaining that 21 partnerships will be presented at the IGR-2 and descriptions of these partnerships can be found on the IGR-2 website. Dr. Balgos reiterated the important role of partnerships in furthering the implementation of the GPA, noting that these partnerships could benefit from the broad lessons learned from the 321 Partnerships for Sustainable Development that are registered with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. Finally, Dr. Balgos introduced the White Water to Blue Water (WW2BW) Partnership, one of the partnerships to be presented at the IGR-2. She said that WW2BW serves as a model for orchestrating partnerships.

Mr. Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum, briefly outlined the role of Stakeholder Forum in engaging stakeholders in the preparatory process of the IGR-2. He noted that Stakeholder Forum had facilitated the preparation of a stakeholder position for the Preparatory Meeting of the IGR-2 in June, and that many of the recommendations put forward had been incorporated into the draft version of the Beijing Declaration. He explained that the Ministerial/high level segment of the IGR-2 is expected to endorse the Beijing Declaration on furthering the implementation of the GPA. He called on participants to offer their suggestions on how the Beijing Declaration could be strengthened, particularly from the perspective of the freshwater community. He noted that it is important for stakeholders to have the opportunity to input to intergovernmental processes, as it yields stronger outcomes and improved implementation.

DISCUSSION

Babatope Babalobi, Bread of Life Development Foundation, asked whether local authorities and related organizations have a role to play in the GPA process. A response was given that local authorities do have an important role to play in the GPA process. ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability were involved in the first review of the GPA. Margaret Pageler, ICLEI, introduced the organisation as an association of 500 municipalities worldwide, which focuses on developing Local Agenda 21 plans with communities. She said that issues related to climate change have been the main focus of ICLEI's work, but the organisation is increasingly involved with marine issues.

Mohamed Abdel Khalek, Egypt, asked what the performance indicators are to evaluate the marine environment, underscoring the importance of marine resources for food security. Chris Tompkins noted that we have not yet found a method for accurately valuing marine resources, though he highlighted the potential role of the GPA in this area. He noted that different groups are working on indicators, but insufficient resources limit the capacity of countries to apply them. Biliانا Cicin-Sain added that the Global Forum - GPA Partnership is aiming to explore the development of a parsimonious set of indicators which could be applied in subsequent global reporting on the progress in implementing WSSD targets on ecosystem management and integrated coastal and ocean management.

Chris Baker, Wetlands International, asked about the relationship between the GPA and conservation groups. Biliانا Cicin-Sain explained that both the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office and the Global Forum have good relationships with large environmental NGOs. Chris Tompkins highlighted the relationship between the UNEP/GPA Coordination Office and other Multilateral Environment Agreements. He noted that the Ramsar Convention is actively involved in the GPA process and that biodiversity issues are increasingly being integrated into the water agenda.

Joke Muylwijk, Gender and Water Alliance, said that she had attended the consultation hosted by Stakeholder Forum in June in London, where participants prepared amendments to the Beijing Declaration. She explained that at this meeting she had noted that diversity of people, including women and children and indigenous peoples is missing from the document, as is recognition that pollution of the marine environment will affect different groups' well-being, health, and livelihoods differently. Women and children have been shown to be more at risk than men from many pollutants. She said that amendments were prepared at the meeting to ensure that these important issues were reflected, and questioned why these amendments were not reflected in the advance copy of the Beijing Declaration.

Felix Dodds explained that Stakeholder Forum had attended the IGR-2 Preparatory Meeting in Paris in June, where he presented these recommendations to governments. He explained that while many of the recommendations were incorporated into the Beijing Declaration, others were not. He emphasised Stakeholder Forum's intention to resubmit these recommendations at the IGR-2 in Beijing, in the hopes that this important issue will be reflected in the final Declaration. Chris Tompkins added that perhaps the women's networks could also lobby their partner governments to support such amendments.

A meeting participant asked what the GPA process could achieve, noting that often governments sign up to multilateral environmental agreements but do not implement them at home. He spoke of the case of Uganda. Felix Dodds explained that global agreements enable civil society to hold governments to account by reporting on implementation of those commitments. Chris Tompkins added that governments don't always factor in the value of their marine resources, but that the GPA process can act as a mechanism to put pressure on governments. He explained that the GPA helps to build global awareness about protecting the marine environment and that it aims to provide guidance and support at the national level, so managers can have tools and guidelines.

Diane Dillon-Ridgley, Blue Planet Run, highlighted the importance of mechanisms or tools for tracking government records on implementation of international commitments. She noted the example of the Women's Environment and Development Organisation, which received funding from UN agencies to report on government implementation.

Ingrid Brettar, Helmholtz-Center for Infection Research, emphasised the need for specific and quantifiable parameters for marine pollution. For example, she explained that a parameter should be included for upper limits of nitrogen or bacteria in the marine environment. Chris Tompkins noted that the new EU Maritime Policy contains a set of such indicators. He explained however, that there are two problems with attempting to make such commitments global: it is expensive to implement and monitor, and many governments will be unwilling to commit to their adoption. Ingrid Brettar responded that reluctance to implement such indicators is due to questions of management, not expenses, and that meeting participants should think about some limits. Felix Dodds said that this was something that could be worked on. He suggested, for example, that we could include a target for reducing wastewater discharge. Felix Dodds went on to say that the tourism industry needs to be better engaged in the GPA process, in light of their impacts on the marine environment. He noted that there are some good case study examples within the tourism industry which could be better shared and acted on. Ingrid Brettar said that the tourism industry would profit from good environmental regulations due to their interest in having an unpolluted coastal environment. Biliana Cicin-Sain suggested that perhaps we could include a recommendation in the Beijing Declaration on a common set of indicators that could be applied globally.

Sylvand Kamugisha, IUCN-Tanzania, presented the case of the Pangani River Basin Management Project in Tanzania, which aims to achieve improved management of the basin's water resources and reduce the conflicts that exist between users. He said that one aspect of the project is to assess the effects of upstream activities, and to put in place indicators to monitor human impacts on the river basin.

Felix Dodds spoke of the need to further explore the potential for converting wastewater into energy, noting that this could provide a win-win solution for both the marine environment and access to energy.

Ingrid Brettar reiterated her call for the inclusion of upper limits for pollution, noting that without them, there is no value to the Beijing Declaration.

Felix Dodds asked participants to focus on the final section of the Beijing Declaration, which calls for a third review of the GPA in 2011. He questioned whether there was a desire to include recommendations on mechanisms for preparing the review, such as national reporting, consultations with stakeholders, or a review system to monitor implementation. Diane Dillion-Ridgley suggested that it could be valuable to explore whether there are similar intergovernmental processes that could be used as an example for follow up, reporting and monitoring, and also for obtaining financial support.

Diane Dillion-Ridgley highlighted the need to examine how to better incorporate health issues within the Beijing Declaration. She noted the example of the World Health Organisation's work on the linkages between human health and environmental degradation, which aims to encourage policy makers to address these linkages as integral to economic development. She noted that if one can demonstrate the cost of inaction to human health, it could help to overcome political barriers in furthering commitment to the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities.

Biliana Cicin-Sain agreed with the comments of Diane Dillon-Ridgley, adding that the GPA is soft law, with implementation of commitments being voluntary. She emphasised that stakeholder mobilisation is therefore necessary to pressure governments to implement their commitments. Chris Tompkins also agreed, noting that the cost of inaction to human health is becoming increasingly apparent. He explained that though the GPA process is voluntary, part of the philosophy is to strengthen the Regional Seas Programmes, which are sometimes legally binding depending on the decision of the Parties. He explained how the GPA process has acted as a catalyst within the European Commission for the adoption of strong law on the marine environment. He also highlighted the success of the GPA at the national level, noting that more than 60 countries have developed or are developing National Programmes of Action.

Margaret Pageler, ICLEI, noted the role of national and local legislation in the protection of the marine environment, citing the example of the western coast of the United States, where it is private owners causing long term damage, not industry. Miriam Balgos said that the White Water to Blue Water Partnership is undertaking an initiative to demonstrate synergies between the National Programmes of Action and the World Health Organization's Water Safety Plans. Chris Tompkins underlined the importance of the work of the Global Environment Facility in helping to build capacity and expertise around the world on international waters issues and the strategic role of their developing partnership with the GPA.

A final question was asked about the relationship between the Beijing Declaration and the Green Paper on Maritime Policy from the Economic Commission. Chris Tompkins responded that there is no formal relationship, though the two documents cover similar issues.

Chris Tompkins thanked participants for attending the meeting. He noted that the challenge is now for stakeholders to find a way to bring issues including many raised today to the IGR-2. He said that Stakeholder Forum will produce a report of the meeting, which will be circulated to meeting participants. He welcomed participants to send their suggestions for strengthening the Beijing Declaration to Stakeholder Forum. Dr Biliana Cicin-Sain also called on participants to think of specific language for the Beijing Declaration on issues such as reporting, civil society, and health, for example.

PARTICIPANTS

Iole Issaias, UN-Habitat

Ingrid Brettar, Helmholtz-Center for Infection Research

Mohamed Abdel Khalek, Egypt

Sergey Govorushko, Pacific Geographical Institute

Margaret Pageler, ICLEI Local Government Sustainability

Babatope Babalobi, Bread of Life Development Foundation

Trinadha Raju Rudraraju, GeoRIST

Falk Schmidt, International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change

Johan Sundberg, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Joseph Sebastin Paimpillil, CEREM

Olivier Bommelaer, Agence de L'eau Seine-Normandie

Katharine Cross, IUCN

Toru Miya, Japan Water Forum

Charles Lwanga Bbaale, Save Our Planet Earth

Thomas Stratenwerth, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Germany

Mangala Wickramanayake, Global Water Partnership, Sri Lanka

Sylvand Kamugisha, IUCN-Tanzania

Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, Blue Planet Run

Joke Muylwijk, Gender and Water Alliance

Chris Baker, Wetlands International

Chris Tompkins, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK

Biliana Cicin-Sain, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands

Miriam Balgos, Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts and Islands

Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum

Jennifer Peer, Stakeholder Forum

Saskia Walzel, Stakeholder Forum